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tutions in the United States is very full, but not quite complete. The volume is simply indispensable to students of charity, and general students of sociology will find abundant materials for consideration in the discussions, since laws and principles of common life are illustrated from cases more closely studied than would be possible under normal conditions.

C. R. HENDERSON.

Essays in Taxation. By EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN. Macmillan & Co., New York and London, 1895. 434 pp., 8vo. \$3.

UNDER the designation of "Essays in Taxation" Professor Seligman has made a useful survey of that portion of the product of the taxing power, as applied directly, to which he assigns the name "taxes," leaving to the one side fees, and introducing special assessments only for the purpose of showing that—call them what we will, special assessments or betterment tax—they are not taxes. After a brief historical essay on the development of taxation he discusses the general property tax, the single tax, the inheritance tax and taxation of corporations, introducing incidentally to these subjects double taxation by the same and by competing authorities. He then classifies public revenues, reviews recent reforms in taxation, and closes with a critical estimate of the recent literature of the subject.

The writer is not as strong in history as in analysis and criticism, and in his opening chapter has failed to recognize the part played by purveyance in the evolution of taxation, consequently the order of growth given on pages 6 and 7 is not historical. The terminology at times is not clear; as on page 10, where the writer says that indirect taxes were introduced into England in the seventeenth century. On page 19 it appears that it was the excise which was introduced in the seventeenth century, and which seems to be used as an equivalent for indirect taxes. On page 40 we are told that there "is no evidence to prove that trading capital proper was ever taxed" at Rome, while on the following page we read that trading capital was taxed for the first time by Vespasian. It is with difficulty that we discover that the two remarks are intended to apply to different periods. On page 42 we read that "in England the feudal payments (*scutages*, *carucages* and *tallages*) became land taxes, just as the Saxon *ship geld* and *danegeld* were land taxes." The three feudal taxes mentioned were, in their origin, land taxes, and never went through a process of becoming such.

The discussion of the general property tax is admirable. The whole trend of the book is toward "faculty" as the basis of taxation. The general property tax was wholly condemned, because product has today superseded property as an index of faculty. Henry George's single tax theory is condemned for not going far enough. "Not the labor theory but the social utility theory is the real defense of private property," but if we accept the single-taxers' premises we are driven by logic from their camp into that of the socialists. The various arguments for the inheritance tax—the extension-of-escheat theory, the diffusion-of-wealth theory, the cost-of-service and price-of-privilege theories—are all presented only to be condemned, and finally the tax is justified upon the basis of relation to faculty.

The most valuable contribution of the book to the theory of taxation is the portion concerning corporations, covering nearly one-third of its pages. In briefest summary the conclusions reached are as follows: Corporations should be taxed separately and differently from individuals; locally only on real estate; for state purposes on earnings or on capital and loans. As to the latter, residence of share or bondholder should be immaterial; there should be no distinctions between foreign and domestic corporations. Property beyond the state should be exempt; capital stock and property both should not be taxed; where either of these is taxed the shareholder should be exempt, and so too the bondholder when loans are taxed. An additional tax should be levied on corporations which have through natural, legal or economic forces become monopolistic enterprises.

Those who have had experience not only in paying but in spreading special assessments will not fully agree with Professor Seligman, either in his classification or his commendation of this product of the taxing power. Special assessments are denied the quality of taxes because their product is measurable, because they are an equivalent for value received rather than proportional to faculty, and because they are not regularly recurrent. But these distinctions become somewhat indistinct as one examines the contrasts. It is notorious that the measurability of such assessments is largely theoretic and hypothetical and that the value received by the general public cannot any more be set off clearly from that of the persons assessed than can the so-called indirect benefits from the direct. The distinction as to recurrence is largely formal; substitute larger periods for years and it substantially disappears. Again, within the range of abutting owners the assess-

ment is according to faculty, and so in each widening circle of diminishing benefits. Professor Seligman cites the decisions of the federal courts in support of his contention; but in his discussion of "the police versus the taxing power" he condemns their decisions as contradictory and confusing. But passing from the name to the substance, one needs not to look to the corrupt management of our great cities to see much that is evil in the essence of the special assessment system. Even in our small municipalities where politics and boodle are yet unknown the system is anything but satisfactory when tested by the doctrine of equivalents, and none are less charmed with it than the municipal authorities who make use of it. There is at least an open question whether a system of local areas of general taxation would not work more equitably, such as is the basis of the rate for sewers in English towns. Taxation according to faculty for such improvements as special assessments cover in America might well tend to a diffusion of benefit according to faculty.

Exception has been taken to some of the minor details of this volume, but in its emphasis of the trend—historical, scientific and experimental—toward the incidence of taxation upon faculty, it has done good service for the student of finance. JOHN J. HALSEY.

Studies in Economics. By WILLIAM SMART. Macmillan & Co. 1895. Pages 322. Price, \$2.75.

DR. SMART is an economist—and a disciple of the Austrian school—who has also been an employer of labor. It is interesting to find a writer with such intellectual and business antecedents presenting groups of studies in Wages, in Currency, and in Consumption from a standpoint that is distinctly that of sociology. Of the ten essays contained in the book, the title of the last but one—"The Socializing of Consumption"—gives the keynote to the whole series, whilst the closing thought of the last essay—"Industry in the Social Organism" thus reproduces it:

"No considerations of the sacredness of private property or freedom of bequest should be allowed to obscure the fact that the birthright of *every* human soul in a civilized country is an education, a training, and finally, an occupation, that will make it possible for him to realize himself in what we know to be the only true life—the life of thought."

Utility rather than value is emphasized as "the last word in Polit-